

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN EMPOWERING WOMEN: A CASE STUDY OF KANYASHREE PRAKALPA IN WEST BENGAL (INDIA)

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ABSTRACT

“If you educate a man, you educate an individual. However, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered”.—Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

Education is one of the most important subjects of the development of the nation. So, to increase the human resources we need to develop education. But gender discrimination breaks to the increase in resources. And to be award of women, there must be adequate education. Empowerment of women needs to be freely decided and in the interest of the overall development of the country. and needs to treat them equally with men.

In this article, the main issues of women education in India are highlighted. One of the main problems in education is Gender Bias. which has been criticized here. And some projects have been taken by the government to solve this problem. In the various project for solved problems of women as well as of girl child, the Kanyashree Prakalpa is one of the best projects for providing education to girl child with helping money and resistance girl child marriage with dropout students.

KEYWORDS: *Women Empowerment, Education, Kanyashree Prakalpa, Child Marriage*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays promote empower women is a very powerful project in third world country as well as in South Asia. The MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) selected eight international development goals for 2015, which was specified in the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in the year 2000. MDGs third goal is to promote gender equality and women empowerment.

But again in September 2015, the General Assembly of United Nation took the Agenda-2030 for sustainable development goals. which includes 17 various goals. SDGs fifth goal is promoting “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”.

According to the UN, gender equality is not just a human right, it requires a compulsory to create a peaceful and sustainable world. For this, women have to provide equal opportunities to men in education, health care, job and decision-making process. Than the sustainable development can reach its goals. Now 143 countries in the world have put equality among men and women in their own constitution. Even SDG-5 stands for the importance of women’s right with a girl child. If women receive equal attention to men, the SDG can reach this goal.

Over the last decade, girl child marriage was decreased. But to reach Agenda-2030, there is no region that is not currently looking into this issue. though child marriage is four times poorer than the wealthiest families. So, all countries will be stopped child marriage in 2030 to achieve their goal.

At present, all the Government is committed to creating gender equality by various project, enforceable legislation. and to promote women empowerment through compulsory secondary education and higher education. To reach this goal, the Government of West Bengal introduced the KanyashreePrakalpa. In keeping with human rights-related research, the Government of West Bengal has been selected KanyashreePrakalpa in front of preventing child marriage and reduce dropout girl children in school.

Poverty, child marriage due to poverty, young age pregnancy, domestic work are the main causes of school dropout, according to various research studies of women. To improve the project girls should stay in school, though there are various causes for school dropout. Through this project to ensure the study and to aware child marriage is harmful to girl children, adolescents have a significant impact on girls, to aware becoming self-reliant, talk about the participation of girls in decision-making process, talk about making society, talk to participate in family decisions. This project has played an important role in empowering women to ensuring the quality education of children.

Women Education: Ancient India to Modern India

In the time of ancient India, Indian women were most estimable position. At this time, women education was given prominence step for empowerment. So, this time was called the Matriarchal era. Specifically, during the Sindhu Civilization women education was called 'Golden Time'. Even in the Vedic age, the right to education of women was important in their society. During the earlier Vedic period, women used to study Vedas and actively participate in religious programs. Like men, they used to observe Brahmacharya and used to study Vedas, Upanishad. Basically, they did not have to right to marriage before the end of their education. But, there was a slight difference between the earlier Vedic period and the later Vedic period. Since the Yajurveda, the attitude towards women has changed in society and women's education rights have been reduced. Yet at the time the women take part in religious ceremonies with their husbands. Even they were efficient in singing song, dancing, fine-arts, etc.

After the Vedic age, religious traditions in Brahmanya education were the most important for education. As a result, liberalization of education was mostly curtailed and girls were pushed into the room. Women education were partly collapsed by the oppression of religion. Even Manusanghita considers women to be a curse of society. Later in Manusanghita, the social status of women was manifested as "In the childhood, there will be women under the father, in adolescence under the husband, and in the absence of their husbands, they will be under the sons. Women will never be free".

Before the Buddha education women did not enjoy equal rights. Even in the time of Buddha education women did not have the right to read in Sangha.

Completely the spread of women's education in ancient India was satisfactory. Although there were most women's right in all education centers. Even in this time, women's position in higher education was worthy of remark.

In the modern era, the position of women is very low compared to ancient times. Women education in the pre and post period of India's independence has largely become a disorder due to social structural and other contemporary issues.

As a result, women are facing various obstacles in empowerment through education. In the modern era, women also suffer various types of inconvenience like female feticide, poverty, gender stereotyping and patriarchy, lack of social consciousness and superstitions, inequality in physiological aspects, malnutrition, gender inequality in the curriculum, inequality in institution's infrastructure, etc.

Women's Right in West Bengal

Since the renaissance of Bengal, the social reformers of Bengal played different roles at different times for the women emanate from the 'Andarmahal' and to established women in different places of society. So, the education of women was given the most importance in society. From that time initiative of women education was the main objective. But today poverty and illiteracy are obstructed.

These two issues are being followed by child marriage and women trafficking. The Department of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal has taken steps on these two issues. In this initiative taking various projects and plans to maintain women education. So emphasize women empowerment, the West Bengal Government gives importance to the girl child after birth. And this regards 'Kanyashree' is one of the key projects.

About Kanyashree prakalpa

Kanyashree Prakalpa— a conditional cash transfer system with the goal of progressing the status of the girl child in West Bengal by encouraging all teenage girls to study in school and delaying their marriage after 18 years of age, which is the real age of marriage. This scheme formulated by the Department of Women Development and social welfare, Government of West Bengal. Kanyashree project is one of the most project for a girl child which is taken by the West Bengal Government. through this project, to improve the life and status of the girl child by economically background family with cash. so that the family did not organize the marriage of the girl child before 18 years because in spite of the poor economic condition and stability of the family. But now it is not mandatory for eligibility criteria. Actually, the aim of the project is to give opportunity and uplift those girls to study who are from a poor family. According to the District Level Household and Facility Survey Report 2007-08 (DLHS-3), every two girls from West Bengal each have a child bride. For this reason, the West Bengal Government launch this project. So, the girls of poor families can continue their studies without marriage. The West Bengal government thought that it would reduce dropout from school and reduce child marriage also. Under this project unmarried women of 13 to 18 years old girl child study any recognized school will get an annual income scholarship of Rs-750/- (first time it is 500/-) its call K-1 project and another side for college girl students get One-Time Grant of Rs-25000/- its call K-2. this Grant only for those girls who are unmarried and who are over 18 years old.

Aims and Objectives

Kanyashree project is to make the goal of the condition of reducing the spread of child marriage and the enrollment of girls in secondary education or other training institution. And embolden the delay of marriage age of girl's child until they reach the 18 years of girl's marriage age.

Scheme's Eligibility Criteria

Annual Scholarship

Rs-750/- scholarship is available as annual scholarship. The minimum ability to get this scholarship is as follows-

- The girl's student is more than 13 years old and below 18 years of age.
- The girl's student will have to study at least class-VIII.
- The girl's student must be unmarried.

One-Time Grant

Rs-25000/- one-time grant are available for K-2 project. The minimum ability to get this grant is as follows-

- The girl's student age turns 18 years.
- The girl's student must be unmarried.
- The girl's student will have to engage in an academic or occupation pursuit.

Effectiveness of KanyashreePrakalpa

Money is the prime importance for them, and obviously it would be. It results that the girl child discontinues her study and drops out from school and as it generally happens in poor countries like India that the school dropout, inexperienced, needy girls fall victim of the harmful custom of marrying at their childhood. The present Government of West Bengal recognizes the social problem and through its KanyashreePrakalpa fulfill the Sarbyasiksha program. KanyashreePrakalpa is a conditional direct cash transfer scheme for young girls of lower-income families. It has two wings K--1 and K--2. K-1 is applicable to Girl aged between 13 – 18 years and studying in a Government or Government undertaking school K-2 is applicable to girls who are enrolled in a government or Government undertaking college-aged between 18-19 years. As per the scheme K--1 Rs. 500/- has been credited to the beneficiary account in each year up to the age of 18. The amount to some extent will meet the recurring expenses of education but more importantly, it motivates girls of poor families to come to school. It reduces the tendency to drop out of school. Moreover, as per the scheme K-2, a beneficiary will receive Rs. 25000/- as a one-time grant. Which is Rs. 8333/- per year. It motivates girls of poor families to higher education after completion of school education. A college girl with this amount can easily bear it recurring expenses in gradation level. So, a girl who at the age of 13 comes under the purview of Kanyashree Prakalpa can easily continue her study up to Graduation without facing any financial obstacles. It relieves parents of the economical weaker section to bear the expenses of girls' education and also motivates them to encourage girls to attend the school and after completion of school education to pursue higher study.

Preventing Girl Child Marriage

Kanyashree Prakalpa not only minimizes the tendency of girl students to dropout from schools at early age at the same time it will make a positive impact on the prevention of girl child marriage. A precondition of the Prakalpa is not being married. A girl who gets the benefit of the Prakalpa (K-1) will enjoy the benefit until she is reached at the age of 17. Survey reveals that during a significant percentage of girl child marriage occurs during the age of 15 to 17. In most of the cases, the marriage is organized by family. Parents of the girl through this marriage offload a liability. But after

implementation of KanyashreePrakalpa families think twice to marry their girl at an early age. After that marriage, the girl will not be a beneficiary. The amount of Rs. 500/-per month means a lot to a poor family. Moreover, after completion of the school when the girl enrolled herself with a college she will get another opportunity to get the benefit of the scheme (K-2). The benefitted amount this time is higher than the previous one and its preconditions are (a) being unmarried and (b) the minimum age should be 18 and not more than 19. For obvious reasons the girl herself and her family would like to get the benefit and its result is that the family would not arrange the marriage of the girl before her age of 18. It obviously reduces the prevalence of child marriage in the state.

CONCLUSIONS

Early marriage is closely related to poverty. In the third world countries, the level of discrimination intensified by the bad influence of child marriage, health misconceptions, various superstitions, prejudice in the economic field. Naturally 'Kanyashree' is a solution to reduce gender discrimination, resistance to child marriage, decrease school dropout, school-oriented, increase awareness in society. However, the subject matter is largely dependent on the functional skill of the project.

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